

Mr. Greg Aldrich, Administrator

Water Quality Division

Department of Environmental Quality

811 S.W. Sixth Avenue

Portland, Oregon 97204-1390

Re: Determination of Progress – Oregon’s Nonpoint Source (NPS) Management Program (in 2013)

Dear Mr. Aldrich:

Thank you for submitting the Oregon Nonpoint Source Pollution Program 2013 Annual Report (Annual Report), prepared by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ). Section 319(h)(11) of the Clean Water Act requires States to report annually on progress under their approved NPS Management Programs, including pollutant load reductions and improvements to water quality. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must establish whether the State made “Satisfactory progress” each year implementing its NPS Management Program, prior to awarding Section 319 funds. The Annual Report is a primary means (along with other reporting conducted under the program and the new checklist) by which we make this determination and evaluate performance of the open 319 grants.

Based grants. Based on our review we conclude that Oregon has made satisfactory progress in 2013 under its NPS management program.

In our enclosed detailed review comments ~~—entitled,~~ Review Comments on Oregon’s NPS Program Progress in (calendar year) 2013, we acknowledge both areas of progress and the need areas for continued emphasis, as pertains to the following: (1) the State’s utilization of Section 319 funds; (2) the prioritization and funding of 319 projects through watershed-based planning efforts such as the completion of the Powder River Basin Water Quality Status Action Plan Summary; (3) the coordination of NPS program activities with various State and federal programs and jurisdictions, including the leveraging of funding sources such as Clean Water State Revolving Fund loans for the City of Ashland and the Central Oregon Irrigation District; (4) the process for achieving full approval of the State Coastal NPS Program; and (5) monitoring, achieving results, and the reporting of water quality improvements and pollutant reductions from NPS projects such as the Kitchis River. We appreciate the continued progress the State made the past year addressing many of these key program issues.

A key EPA management goal stemming from the national NPS program study prepared in 2011 was for 50% of the states (focusing on those with outdated plans) to update their NPS management plans by the end of FY September 30, 2013. EPA provided updated guidance on the elements of these plans, particularly as pertains to the updating of program goals, priorities, milestones, and cooperating agency involvement. Thank you for submitting a revised Draft Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan. We are currently reviewing this plan and hope to provide you comments shortly.????

We have also enclosed the Checklist for Determining Progress of State NPS Management Programs in 2012, completed by the EPA, and applicable to this Oregon review. This checklist, developed under the recommendations of the 2011 national NPS study, is intended to provide a nationally consistent framework for determinations of state progress, and supplements both this letter and the enclosed

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detailed comments. The new national program guidelines were issued by the EPA on 4/12/13. These newer guidelines apply to this upcoming FY14 funding cycle.

The EPA will continue to work in partnership with Oregon to address NPS water quality issues, including program activities and projects supported directly through EPA Section 319 funding. In particular, we will continue to work together to direct program resources to watersheds within which measurable water quality program improvements can be achieved. ~~We appreciate all the hard work and dedication by ODEQ and the State to implement the NPS program this past year.~~

Thank you again for submitting Oregon's comprehensive 2013 NPS Annual Report. We appreciate all the hard work and dedication by ODEQ and the State to implement the NPS program this past year.
Please feel free to contact me at (206) 553-1855 or Martha Turvey, Oregon NPS Coordinator at (206) 553-1354.

Sincerely,

Daniel D. Opalski, Director
Office of Water and Watersheds

Enclosures: Review comments on Oregon NPS Program Progress in 2013 Checklist for Determining Progress in 2013.

Checklist for Determining Progress of State NPS Management Programs in 2013

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